

Members of the Technical Review Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to join with the Mayor of Waukegan, the Waukegan Citizens Action Group, our industry partners, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to discuss the vital importance of the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor.

This meeting is the culmination of years of working together to clean up our Waukegan environment to unlock its real potential. The proposal before you today represents the work of local, county, state and federal officials, in addition to the contributions of private citizens. After working on this issue for more than 22 years, I am confident that we are ready to finish the job of cleaning up Waukegan Harbor.

The Waukegan Lakefront Development Project consists of approximately three miles of shoreline and is the only deepwater harbor between Chicago and Milwaukee. It consists of more than 1,600 acres of land that presents an economic opportunity second only to the O'Hare project in its ability to increase incomes in Northern Illinois.

According to the International Joint Commission, Waukegan Harbor suffers from six problems as a result of pollution. These include:

- Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption
- Beach closings
- Degradation of benthos
- Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations
- Restriction on dredging activities
- Loss of fish and wildlife habitat

Any one of these environmental impacts would be reason enough to necessitate the cleanup of the harbor. But the combination of all six factors results in a call for environmental action.

Broadly, there are two primary benefits to restoration efforts of the harbor – improving the economy of Illinois and protecting the health of children and their parents.

After the expansion of O'Hare Airport, the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor is the most important economic development project in northeastern Illinois. Cleanup of the harbor is essential to attracting commercial and recreational investment, as well as increasing the area's appeal to new homeowners and tourists.

According to a study from the Northeast-Midwest Institute in Washington, D.C., homeowners in Waukegan can expect an average home value appreciation of approximately \$53,000 in the event of harbor redevelopment. That represents a combined property value increase of more than \$832 million for the community. But these anticipated benefits are much more than a boon to incomes. Increased revenues from property taxes will boost funding for local schools. By increasing funding for classrooms, Waukegan will educate future citizens who will build our growing economy.

The positive benefits of a better-educated workforce also will have ripple effects in the area's business community. Companies are attracted to areas with strong schools because of the high-quality of the labor market. The corresponding increased availability of high-paying jobs will improve the overall quality of life for all residents in northeastern Illinois.

Environmental improvements are also well worth the financial investment in remediation. It is our responsibility to eliminate the harmful Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) found in the sediments of the harbor. As one of the last deep-water harbors in the Great Lakes, Waukegan Harbor is an important access point for recreation. Current fish advisories represent a threat to humans and depress the emergence of our 21st century recreational economy.

The loss of fish and wildlife habitat in northeastern Illinois also represents a dangerous link in the local food chain. In sum, we owe a duty to the public to clean up this harbor.

The plan before you today represents a collaborative public-private effort. The recovery of this habitat has many fathers and mothers. First, I want to thank Mayor Hyde, his aldermen and his team – especially John Moore who has become the key expert in our final recovery. I also want to thank Gov. Blagojevich, Lt. Governor Pat Quinn and State Senator Terry Link for ensuring the State of Illinois' help. I also want to thank Suzie Schmidt and her Lake County team.